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THE SMALLER BATTALIONS

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In view of the long series of Allied defeats suffered in Norway, northern France, Greece, Malaya, the Philippines, and Burma, the political observer has had to ask himself again and again what hope could have induced the Anglo-Americans to continue the war. The last few months have supplied the answer to this question: it is the hope for superiority in numbers—numbers of men and material. Since the autumn of 1942, the Allies have endeavored to fight battles only in places where they have had overwhelming numbers of troops and armaments on their side, as, for instance, in North Africa, Guadalcanar, Attu, and Sicily.

We do not intend to examine here whether the Anglo-Americans actually possess a greater armament capacity or more able-bodied men than the Axis. Instead, we shall raise the question: Does a preponderance in men and weapons offer any justification whatever for the hope of final victory, does the god of war really favor the larger battalions?

NEXT to George Washington, Abraham Lincoln is the best-known figure in the history of the United States. For the Roosevelt era before the outbreak of the present war it can perhaps even be said that Lincoln held first place in the esteem of the American people. His sayings were often quoted, for instance his famous words "government of the people, by the people, for the people" (quoted the more often, the less American reality corresponded to this ideal), or his pronouncement:

"I agree with you in Providence; but I believe in the providence of the most men, the largest purse, and the largest cannon."

This pun, with its linking of Providence with numbers of men, wealth, and armaments, could really stand as a motto for the America of 1943.

But let us be just and admit that Lincoln was not the first to put his trust in large numbers into words. "I have always noticed that God is on the side of the heavy battalions," declared a French statesman, Marquis de la Ferté-

Imbault, to Queen Anne of France. In 1677 the Count de Bussy wrote in a letter: "God is generally for the big squadrons against the little ones." And about a hundred years later, Voltaire formulated the same idea with the words: "They say that God is always on the side of the heavy battalions."

To be sure, there have been many cases in history where the greater battalions defeated the smaller ones. The most important example, still fresh in all our memories, was the strangulation of Germany in the Great War, when almost the entire world had united against her and she herself was weakened from within by the influence of materialistic ideas. But there have also been countless cases in which the opposite was true. History has seen decisive wars and battles which were won by the smaller battalions.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE PERSIAN EMPIRE

Up to the sixth century B.C., the western part of Eurasia had been ruled by three great empires: Egypt, Assyria,

and Babylon. Suddenly, within a period of twenty-one years (546 to 525 B.C.), these states were swept off the map of the world and replaced by the Persian-Median Empire. The Persians and the Medes, two Indo-European tribes hardly known in history till then and overshadowed by the splendor of the empires in the valley of the Nile and in Mesopotamia, established under Cyrus the Great and his son one of the largest empires of all time, reaching from the Danube to beyond the Indus.

Only at the outermost rim of their dominion did a small state—no, even worse, a little conglomeration of tiny city-states—dare to oppose and provoke the mighty Persian Empire by wanton incursions, until the “King of Kings” decided to subject it once and for all. In 490 B.C. he sent out a great army against Greece which crossed the Aegean Sea in many ships. Part of this army landed on the coastal plain of Marathon. Even if all of Greece had moved against the Persians, she still would only have had the resources of a single one of the twenty satrapies into which the Persian Empire was divided. However, the Greek army that opposed the Persians at Marathon did not even represent all of Greece but only two of the city-states, Athens and Plataea. Yet it gained a glorious victory and threw the Persian landing corps back into the sea.

The subsequent encounters between Greeks and Persians were fought in the spirit of Marathon. At the pass of Thermopylae, Leonidas fought with a thousand men against the whole Persian army, consisting of tens of thousands of men, and at Salamis the Greeks defeated a Persian fleet at least twice as strong as their own.

How are these victories of the smaller battalions to be explained, this strange paradox—first the conquest of a huge empire by two young tribes, and then the defeat of this empire’s forces by the army of two small Greek cities? We shall attempt an explanation later on in this article.

ALEXANDER AND THE ROMANS

With these victories against the vast Persian Empire, the Greeks had not only maintained their own national freedom: they had brought about a decision affecting the entire history of the world. To the west of Greece there was at that time nothing that could have resisted an expansion of the Persian Empire. A victory over the Greeks would have turned the Mediterranean into a Persian lake and given the development of the Occident a different turn.

This defensive victory of the Greek minority was even surpassed by the achievements contained in the aggressive victory of Alexander the Great against the Persian Empire a century and a half later. In the spring of 334 B.C. the barely twenty-year-old king crossed the Hellespont with 32,000 men on foot and 5,000 horsemen to invade the Persian Empire, which commanded hundreds of thousands of warriors. With his small host Alexander won the decisive victories of Issos (333) and Gaugamela (331 B.C.). At Gaugamela he was faced by an army perhaps twenty times the size of his own which, moreover, was equipped with such unusual weapons as scythed war chariots and Indian elephants. The superiority was so great that Alexander’s army, although he had drawn it out as far as possible, extended with its right wing no further than the center of the Persian host.

A few years after Alexander had broken into the Persian Empire, he was the uncontested master of an empire that was larger even than the old Persian one. How was this possible? We shall return to this question later.

While the Alexandrian Empire arose within a few years through the genius of one man, the Roman Empire was the product of centuries of steady growth and of the genius of a whole people. But in one point the early history of both empires was similar: both were formed in the face of vastly superior enemies. Starting as a small, unimportant settlement whose territory was less fertile than that of other places of the same region

Rome step by step gained hegemony first over Latium, then over the Apennine Peninsula, then over the western and later eastern Mediterranean, and finally over the entire Occident.

PHARSALOS AND ACTIUM

The long list of battles fought by the Roman armies on the hard road to power contains hardly anything that is equal in brilliance to the campaigns of Alexander the Great. Besides victories there were also many defeats. It is only due to a stubbornness and single-mindedness unique in history that this road led finally to the supremacy of Rome over the western world.

Even while the Roman Empire was still being formed, grave conflicts arose within the empire over the question of leadership. The two decisive battles in this struggle were both won by the smaller battalions. At Pharsalos (48 B.C.) Pompey had about twice as many foot soldiers as Caesar and seven times as many horsemen. But Caesar won the battle and became the sole ruler of the empire. Pharsalos meant the end of the Roman Republic and the beginning of the monarchy and thus represents one of the decisive events in the history of the Occident. Under Caesar's successor, Octavian, the struggle for sole domination was resumed. With a fleet inferior in numbers as well as in the size of its units, Octavian vanquished the power of Antony and Cleopatra at Actium (31 B.C.). This victory enabled him, who was soon to be known as Augustus, to establish a type of monarchy in Rome which was to survive for centuries.

TWO HISTORIC DECISIONS

In the days of Augustus, Rome was at the peak of her power. She knew no rivals in the Occident, and her battle-scarred, excellently armed legions extended the borders of the empire from decade to decade ever further into formerly unknown regions. Yet a battle took place in those years by which a people standing at the very beginning of its development and split up into many

tribes dealt a heavy blow to the overwhelming power of Rome. In 9 A.D. the army of Quintilius Varus was annihilated in the Teutoburg Forest by Germanic warriors under Arminius the Cheruscan. This event prevented the Romanization of the territories on the right bank of the Rhine. In contrast to the Gauls, who had quickly become Roman after the campaigns of Caesar, the Germanic tribes were thus able to develop on their own and to assemble the forces which were one day to lead to the fall of the Roman Empire.

During the migration of peoples the Huns invaded Europe with huge armies and roamed throughout its lands without encountering much resistance. Only when they advanced further to the west, deep into France, were Attila's hundreds of thousands of men opposed by an army composed of Visigoths and Romans (451 A.D.). The battle, which has been named after the Catalaunian Fields, was fought with such terrible fierceness that, according to legend, even the fallen warriors continued to fight on as spirits. The wave of Hun supremacy was not only stopped but even forced to recede, and the victory against Attila contributed decisively toward saving Europe from the fate later suffered by Central Asia and Russia under the Mongols.

CRESCENT AND CROSS

Barely two hundred years later, one of the most amazing developments in history took place: the ascent of Islam. In an unequalled march of victory the armies of the sparse, uncivilized population of the Arabian desert established a vast empire which has left its stamp on many regions to this very day. The foundations of the Mohammedan empire were laid within the ten years after the death of the Prophet in numerous battles in which the Arabs were always in the minority. In an incredibly short time the banner of the Prophet was carried across the whole of the Near East far into Central Asia, and later to the Pyrenees as well as the East Indian archipelago.

The counterblow against the rise of Islam came with the Crusades. In a previous article (July 1942) we related how the Christian expeditionary armies, moving against huge odds and thousands of kilometers away from home, invaded the richly populated, strong Mohammedan empire and, even after grave privations, were victorious against fresh and far superior armies, as, for example, in the Battle of the Holy Lance at the gates of Antioch in 1098, which opened the road into the Holy Land for the first Crusaders.

GENGHIS KHAN AND JOAN OF ARC

The next world power arose one century later from very modest beginnings, when the conqueror who was later to be known as Genghis Khan united several small Mongol tribes under himself. The Mongol storm broke when Genghis Khan led his warriors against the Chin Empire in 1211. In spite of the fact that this empire was far superior to his hordes in every respect—its civilization, its number of people, and the size of its walled cities—he weakened it to such a degree that he could take up his unique victorious campaign against the West. Here the Mongols were in the minority in most of the battles they fought. Among their enemies were many warlike tribes, such as the Turks of Central Asia, who were superior to them in numbers. And yet the Mongols were victorious again and again. Their horses carried them far into Russia and the Near East. And the result of these battles was the greatest empire that ever existed in Eurasia.

Among the longest and most bitterly fought wars in the history of Europe were the medieval conflicts between the French and the English. As a result of dynastic heritage, the English kings had at that time large possessions on French soil. This fact led to an almost endless series of wars which culminated in what is known as the Hundred Years' War (1337 to 1453). For a long time the English were victorious, and at the beginning of the fifteenth century France lay prostrate, almost defenseless. In 1422 an English king was proclaimed King of

France, while the French dauphin was a weakling. Large parts of France were occupied by the English. The English ruled in Paris. They laid siege to Orleans, the gateway to southern France, and the city was preparing to surrender. Then suddenly a peasant girl, called Joan, declared that she had been sent by Heaven to save France. She fought her way into besieged Orleans. Out of unpatriotic cowards she created an army with a fanatic will for victory, an army instilled with ten times its ordinary power and courage. Against English superiority she led this small French army from victory to victory. And although she was later taken prisoner and burned at the stake by the English, her spirit continued to animate the French army. The English were driven from the European Continent, only Calais remaining in their hands for some time. A development of historic importance had been concluded.

CONQUERING THE WORLD

During the next few decades the world experienced a wealth of important events when, in an explosive expansion, the Portuguese and the Spanish created enormous empires with the smallest battalions in history. Accustomed to the idea of armies of millions, we can scarcely conceive today how tiny in numbers the forces were with which those momentous decisions were brought about. With but a few ships, the Portuguese gained the victories of Diu (1509) and Malacca (1511) against vastly superior forces and seized control over the Indian Ocean, thus opening the gates to the riches of the East Indian archipelago. Thousands of miles from home—which at that time could only be reached by the immense detour around Africa—they sailed from victory to victory and turned the ocean from Morocco to the Moluccas into a Portuguese lake.

A few years later the Spaniards succeeded in similar achievements in the Americas. In August 1519, Hernando Cortes, leading a small force of 400 men on foot, 15 horsemen, and 7 small cannons,

started out from the coast of the Gulf of Mexico to conquer the Aztec Empire, then one of the most advanced states of the world, which had a population of perhaps five million inhabitants. In order fully to appreciate the boldness of this venture, one must bear in mind that Cortes began his campaign with no knowledge whatever of the country, its inhabitants, and their languages. On the way to Mexico he first defeated the state of Tlaxcala with its half a million inhabitants and tens of thousands of warriors. Then he conquered Mexico.

One might object that he succeeded in this more by cunning and brutality than by military achievements. However, he had enough opportunity also to prove the military ability of his small force. In July 1520 he was forced to retreat from the city of Mexico and to give battle at Otumba. Here his few hundred Spaniards, assisted by some native allies, fought against the combined armies of the Aztec Empire, which numbered tens of thousands. In this battle Cortes no longer had any cannons, not even muskets; many of his men were sick and exhausted by fatigue and hardship. Yet the victory

was his, and soon afterwards he was the undisputed ruler of the empire.

Just as fantastic were the adventures of Pizarro who, in 1531, set out with an even smaller band—102 men on foot and 62 horsemen—to conquer Peru, then inhabited by six to eight million people. Here, too, the first successes were more of a political than a military nature. But here, too, the conquerors were not spared from battle. In 1535 almost the entire country rose against them. For five months a band of at most 200 Spaniards fought in Cuzco against the mobilized power of the Inca Empire. In writing of 200,000 Inca soldiers, the Spanish chroniclers were probably exaggerating. But, even if there were only 20,000, this meant that there were 100 enemies to every Spaniard. In spite of this, the Spaniards won, and transformed the empire of the Incas into a Spanish colony.

ONE AGAINST EUROPE

One of the most important developments in the modern history of Europe was the rise of Prussia, under whose leadership the German Empire was later to be



Central Europe in the days of Frederick the Great

formed from the combined German states. Prussia is largely the work of the House of Hohenzollern, and it represented the crowning of many wars and of centuries of effort on the part of this dynasty when little Brandenburg became Prussia. One significant stage on this road was the victory gained by the Great Elector of Brandenburg in 1675 at Fehrbellin when, with 6,000 Prussians and 12 cannons, he defeated 12,000 Swedes with 38 cannons. By means of this victory over Sweden, which till then had been regarded as the foremost military nation of Europe, Prussia advanced from an indifferent little state to a larger state worth reckoning with.

Even more important was the reign of Frederick the Great and his Seven Years' War (1756-1763). The Austria of the Hapsburgs, which observed the rise of Prussia with deadly jealousy, organized a powerful coalition against Prussia with the express aim of the "total destruction of Prussia." The greater part of Europe had combined in this coalition, and among its members were Austria, Russia, France, Sweden, Saxony, Bavaria, Württemberg, and a number of smaller states. Prussia, on the other hand, with its barely 2½ million inhabitants, stood alone. Hanover, which had at first allied itself to Prussia, withdrew again early in the war; and England supported Prussia only with money. Year after year Frederick fought against these overwhelming odds. He gained a number of great victories, especially at Rossbach with 20,000 men against 50,000 Frenchmen and at Leuthen with 33,000 men against 60,000 Austrians; and he also suffered many a bitter defeat. In the end, however, he emerged victorious from this unequal struggle. Prussia had become a European power.

RECENT EXAMPLES

A few years after the death of Frederick the Great, this same Prussia failed miserably. In the struggle against the French Revolution, Prussia, England, Holland, Spain, and several smaller states had united in 1792 in a coalition of anti-revolutionary powers. This coalition was vastly superior to France, not only be-

cause all European powers except Russia belonged to it, but also because France herself was torn by civil war and hardly possessed any army at all after thousands of her aristocratic officers had left the country and joined the coalition. The mob which represented the revolutionary army was at first so useless that it ran away in panic from every clash with the coalition troops, even when it was superior in numbers, as at Tournay, where 4,000 Frenchmen fled from a small Austrian detachment. The French fortresses of Longwy and Verdun capitulated, almost without fighting, to the coalition army. But then came a sudden turn. After the Cannonade of Valmy in September 1792 the situation was reversed: the revolutionary armies not only drove the armies of the coalition out of France but even followed them deep into their own territory.

To give a final example of most recent times, we need only think of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-1905. Today we are accustomed to regard Japan as a leading power. At that time, however, she was still in the early stages of her modern development. At the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War, only fifty years had passed since the opening of Japan; only forty years since an English/American/Dutch/French fleet had bombarded Japan, almost without resistance, and had even been paid an indemnity for that; only thirty-three years since the feudal system had been abolished. And this Japan, that seemed hardly to have outgrown the Middle Ages, took up the struggle against one of the largest powers of that time, against a country that possessed almost inexhaustible reserves of man power and resources as well as a great military tradition. After a series of glorious victories, Japan quickly forced the empire of the Tsars to make peace.

IT TAKES LEADERS

How were all these victories of the small battalions against the large ones possible? The answer cannot be formulated in one sentence. It consists of

many reasons, of which we shall present a few. They are to be sought partly in the nature of the leadership and partly in the nature of the peoples and armies so led.

One prerequisite for the victory of the smaller battalions is the genius of their leaders. A true leader needs far more than just the knowledge of military theories and practice; he has the courage to rely upon himself and to take the responsibility for his own decisions. Miltiades risked the battle of Marathon without waiting for the arrival of the Spartan army and without sharing with other leaders the responsibility for the decision to fight. A leader is so unshakeably convinced of his own superiority and that of his men that, even in the face of vast odds and the absence of any aid, he does not hesitate to strike at the enemy, as Cortes and Pizarro did or Frederick the Great at the beginning of the Seven Years' War. This feeling of superiority grows from the leader's faith in his mission, from his belief that he represents the "wave of the future." It endows him with forces that, as in the case of Joan of Arc, border on the supernatural. It is these forces which in apparently hopeless situations do not allow him to lose courage, while his opponents, who do not possess such faith, are inclined to lose their heads, like Pompey who, although an experienced and victorious commander, turned to flight even before the battle was ended, or like Cleopatra and Antony who, thinking mainly of themselves, abandoned the main body of their forces in the midst of battle to seek safety in flight.

This faith in his mission often also raises the leader morally over his enemies. In Actium the nobler man defeated the inferior one; and Joan of Arc fought not only against the English army but also against the lack of morals among her own troops by proclaiming her struggle to be a pure and holy war. The true leader sets an example to his troops. He convinces his soldiers that their leader and they belong together. Alexander the Great was the first soldier of his army

who shared with it all the dangers of battle and hardships of marching, while his opponent Darius had chiefly himself to blame for his defeats, as he was always the first to turn his chariot in flight. And how close Frederick the Great was to the hearts of his soldiers is proved by the countless anecdotes about his personal feats in victory and defeat.

SOME OF THEIR QUALITIES

One requirement of a successful leader is the faculty to discern every possibility offering itself and immediately to exploit it to his own advantage. Miltiades made the most skillful use of the topography of the coastal plain of Marathon in planning his battle. On the battlefield of Gaugamela, Alexander perceived that a gap had formed between the center and the left wing of the Persian army, and by quickly throwing a spearhead of his troops into this gap he split up the enemy's front and thus brought about his own victory. At the beginning of the battle of Pharsalos, Caesar noticed that Pompey was massing his superior cavalry at the left wing in order to execute his decisive thrust with it. This gave Caesar a chance to prepare countermeasures which frustrated Pompey's plan and turned it into a defeat. When the small Spanish band at Otumba, bleeding from many wounds, could hardly defend itself any longer against the hundredfold superiority of its enemies, Cortes suddenly recognized the commander in chief of the Aztec army some distance away. Cortes, accompanied by a few trusty men, fought his way through to the Aztec chief and killed him, thereby giving the battle a new turn.

In order to be able to beat his opponent, the leader must be able to guess the thoughts of his foe. Miltiades, who had previously participated in a Persian campaign in the Balkans, knew that the strength of the Persian army was the deadly hail of arrows released by its archers. In order to reduce the time during which the Greeks could be shot at from a distance with Persian arrows, Miltiades made the bold decision to lead his excellently trained men, in spite of

their heavy armor, to the enemy ranks at a run. Arminius the Cheruscan had also served in the army of his enemies and was acquainted with the Roman legions' style of fighting. He could not hope to defeat the Romans with his inexperienced troops in an open battle. Consequently, he laid his plans in such a way that the battle took place in a forest area full of ravines that was unfavorable to the Romans.

LUCK

Finally, the successful leader requires that indefinable something that we call "luck." Had Cortes not seen the enemy commander in chief in the midst of the battle's tumult, probably not a single Spaniard would have left the battlefield of Otumba alive. Luck played an especially striking role in the case of Frederick the Great. Toward the end of the Seven Years' War his cause looked very bad. Large parts of his small country were occupied by the enemy, who had temporarily even been in the capital. His only support outside of Prussia, the English statesman Pitt, had to resign from the cabinet; this opened the way to the separate peace which England, contrary to her agreement with Frederick, concluded soon after with France. Frederick could have made peace under inglorious conditions. But, although there was no one in Europe who still conceded him a chance, he continued to fight, and suddenly luck came to his aid. Tsarina Elizabeth, who hated him bitterly, died and was replaced on the Russian throne by Peter III, an ardent admirer of Frederick. Peter immediately concluded a separate peace with Prussia and, in addition to that, declared himself and his army to be allied to Frederick. Although he was murdered soon after, he had been on the throne long enough to have caused a complete reversal in the military position and to provide Frederick with the breathing space he needed for the victorious conclusion of the war.

THE SPIRIT OF THE FOLLOWERS. . .

Like the leader, so also must his people and his army be convinced of the neces-

sity of the struggle and of victory, determined to maintain or fight for their freedom. They must be prepared to make every sacrifice needed and be filled with glowing patriotism and the clear knowledge as to the consequences of a defeat. And finally, they must be convinced that they are fighting for a good cause and that right is on their side. At Marathon, the Athenians were filled by a spirit which their great poet Aeschylus, who had participated in the battle, later put into the following words :

O sons of the Greeks! Fight for the freedom of your country! Fight for the freedom of your children and of your wives—for the shrines of your fathers' gods, and for the sepulchers of your sires. All—all are now staked upon the strife.

In the same way, the Germanic tribes in the Teutoburg Forest and on the Catalaunian Fields, and the Japanese at Port Arthur and at Tsushima, were filled with the sense that the fate not only of their people but of every single one of them depended on the outcome of the battle. On the other hand, the Persian army, composed as it was of dozens of subjected tribes, lacked this sense. What did it concern these tribes whether the Persian king won new laurels on the far shores of Greece or not? Hence the only troops in the Persian army who really fought at Marathon and on the other Greek battlefields were the Persians, in the narrow sense of this word. It was impossible in the Russo-Japanese War for the Russian peasant to take a personal interest in the outcome of a war to which he had to be transported thousands of kilometers and in which he was supposed to fight for territories, whose names meant nothing to him, against a people he did not even know. The same Prussians who, under Frederick, had amazed the world with their achievements, failed a few years later when, without a leading idea of their own, they clashed with troops fired with the ideas of a great revolution.

In some cases the determination of the smaller battalions was born out of the courage of their despair. The Spaniards at Otumba and in Cuzco knew, like the Prussians under Frederick, that there

were only two alternatives: victory or complete annihilation. And when religious fanaticism is added—as in the case of the hosts of Islam or the Crusades or Joan of Arc—or a burning feeling of revenge, as that felt by Arminius's men against Varus for his infamous deeds, or by the Visigoths on the Catalaunian Fields when they saw their king Theoderic fall, then even a superiority in numbers cannot save the enemy from defeat.

. . . AND THEIR QUALITY

Very often in history the strength of the small battalions was to be found in the health and simplicity of their youthful power and in the softness of their opponents. The Greek historian Herodotus explains the victories of the Medes and Persians by many examples showing the contrast between the tough virility of these conquerors and the degeneration of their foes. Later the Persians themselves fell victim to this degeneration, and in the speech addressed by Alexander to his troops before the battle of Issos he could justly speak of Greek strength being pitted against Persian degeneration. This stern simplicity was also the secret of the astonishing superiority of the Mongols over their enemies who, in cultural and many other respects, were much further advanced. Under Genghis Khan's leadership, the Mongols lived their whole lives in and for battle and subordinated everything to the one goal: victory.

Often it was new methods of war or new weapons which gave victory to the smaller battalions. The archers of the Persian army contributed much toward the establishment of the great Persian Empire by employing their weapons in such a novel and skillful manner that the enemy had no chance to get close to them. It was only the armored Greek athletes in their close and deeply ranked phalanxes, which they drove like spears into the ranks of their foes, who put an end to this superiority. The muskets, cannons, and horses of the Spaniards provided them with weapons unequalled by anything the natives of America could

produce. And while the Spaniards had developed the art of war into a science—which, for instance, stipulated that at all times only part of the soldiers should shoot while the rest should use this time to reload their guns so that no pause should occur—their enemies fought without any plan or system whatever, simply trying to crush the Spaniards with their masses. The importance of quality and battle experience in every single man was revealed by Caesar's veterans at Pharsalos, when they fought against opponents superior in numbers but inferior in quality.

Discipline has always been an essential factor on the side of victorious armies. The lack of discipline on the part of the Persian troops, who looted Alexander's camp during the battle of Gaugamela, contributed toward their defeat. On the other hand, the armies of the Mongols had been trained by Genghis Khan to iron obedience. In their battles we rarely hear of outstanding individual deeds but always of the excellent achievements of the army as a whole. Discipline increases in effectiveness the more it originates from the voluntary willingness of each man to subordinate himself to the whole, while it loses its value the more it is a product of mere drill or fear of punishment. This was shown by the wars of the French Revolution, in which undisciplined troops who were filled with faith in their cause were victorious over the disciplined but personally uninterested troops of the reactionary powers.

THE ENEMY'S WEAKNESS

The inner strength of the smaller battalions very often corresponded to the inner weakness of the larger ones. How often has it not happened in history that a state that was already ripe for decline was defeated by a young, determined opponent inferior in numbers? The tiny band of Spanish adventurers which, with Cortes, invaded the empire of the Aztecs, would, in spite of all superiority of the individual, have easily been destroyed if that empire had been sound and vital. But this state was populated, beside a

comparatively small number of ruling Aztecs, by a large majority of subjected peoples who, at the very time when Cortes appeared on the horizon, showed a growing restlessness toward the Aztecs. One of the main reasons for this restlessness was that the bloody human sacrifices demanded by the Aztec religion were assuming larger and larger proportions and swallowing up tens of thousands of lives every year. The Aztec ruler Montezuma, who had commenced his reign as a wise prince, lost himself more and more in luxury and bigotry. The necessary funds and human sacrifices had to be provided by the surrounding peoples.

At the time of the war against Japan, the Russian state, too, had become inwardly rotten. This was shown by the revolution of 1905, the curtain raiser to the gory collapse of the centuries-old empire of the Tsars twelve years later.

BLINDED BY THE GODS

The saying that the gods strike those with blindness whom they wish to destroy can frequently be applied to the rulers of states doomed to decline. The stupid mistakes which Darius constantly repeated in his war against Alexander the Great, and his habit of following incapable counsellors and shutting his ears to the capable ones, played into the hands of the Macedonian conqueror. Varus believed in his arrogance that the methods he had used as the governor of

Syria against the population enslaved there for centuries could also be used against the free Germanic tribes. He failed to see that he was thus digging his own grave, and he was so blind that he did not recognize the transparent ruse with which Arminius lured him and his legions into the Teutoburg Forest.

In the case of Montezuma it was a blindness born of bigotry which contributed toward his downfall. He succumbed to a religious legend according to which the benevolent god Quetzatcoatl had once left Mexico in the direction of the rising sun with the promise to return one day. As this god was, according to Mexican tradition, of tall stature with a white skin and a heavy beard, Montezuma was inclined to see the returning god in Cortes, and this superstition robbed him of his power of decision and clarity of action.

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So we see that the victories of the smaller battalions were not coincidences or freaks of history. They always occur when certain conditions, some of which we discussed here, are present. A study of history shows that, in the great conflicts between peoples, it is not wealth or numbers which are the deciding factor but the spirit animating the peoples; for the god of war does not count the men, he weighs their hearts.